



**For Immediate Release
May 31, 2006**

**Contacts: Vanessa Gulati
617-626-1119**

STATE ANNOUNCES REOPENING OF OFF-ROAD VEHICLE TRAILS

The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) today announced that trails designated for off-road vehicle (ORV) use have been reopened in F. Gilbert Hills State Forest, Freetown-Fall River State Forest, Beartown State Forest, October Mountain State Forest, Pittsfield State Forest, Tolland State Forest, and Georgetown-Rowley State Forest. All ORV trails on DCR property are now open for use.

DCR closed its ORV trails on May 19, due to extremely wet trail conditions caused by the large amounts of rainfall experienced in the Commonwealth—riding an ORV on wet trails can cause significant trail damage. The trails have been reopened as conditions have improved thanks to drier weather.

DCR asks that riders help promote safe ORV use and protect the environment by following these simple guidelines:

- Respect private property and closed areas
- Ride only on trails that are designated for motorized ORV use
- Keep to the right side of the trail and go slow around blind corners and through intersections
- When passing or approaching other trail users, reduce speed, yield right-of-way and do not pass until it can be accomplished with complete safety
- To prevent habitat and trail damage, stay within the trail corridor and use bridges to cross streams and wet areas
- Try to avoid muddy trails, as they are easily damaged.

All persons operating an ORV must also wear an approved helmet. Under no circumstances may a person under the age of 12 operate an ORV on state lands. A person aged 12 or 13 may operate an ORV if directly supervised by a person over 18 years of age.

DCR is currently in the process of setting standards for any future ORV trail development. To assist the agency in that effort, DCR has assembled a working group composed of trails users, scientists, land management organizations and other stakeholders to review and refine ORV use criteria. Written comments can be sent to ORV.Feedback@state.ma.us. The ORV use criteria can be viewed at [http:// www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/orvworkgroup.htm](http://www.mass.gov/dcr/recreate/orvworkgroup.htm).

###

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS · EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Department of Conservation and Recreation
251 Causeway Street, Suite 600
Boston MA 02114-2119
617-626-1250 617-626-1351 Fax
www.mass.gov/dcr



Mitt Romney
Governor

Kerry Healey
Lt. Governor

Stephen R. Pritchard, Secretary
Executive Office of Environmental Affairs

Stephen H. Burrington, Commissioner
Department of Conservation & Recreation